

DNREC Natural Resources Police Make Arrests in Stolen Vessel Incident



Matthew
Tortu

DNREC Fish and Wildlife Natural Resources Police arrested Matthew Tortu, 24, and Travis Gooding, 21, both of Coatsville, Pennsylvania on August 22 for multiple felony criminal charges and boating violations in response to and after investigating a report of a stolen vessel.

The suspects were allegedly observed before daybreak on August 22 in a vessel aground on a sand bar in the Indian River Bay by other boaters in the area who reported the incident and that the vessel occupants were not the owners of the subject vessel. Natural Resources Police officers responded to the report and arrested Tortu and Gooding at the site upon determining that the Maritime Skiff vessel had been stolen earlier that morning from Tuckahoe Acres where it was moored.

Tortu and Gooding were both charged with one count each of felony theft, felony conspiracy, criminal mischief, no boating safety certification, no navigation lights and negligent operation of a motor vessel. Gooding was also charged with one count of failure to maintain a proper lookout.



Travis
Gooding

Tortu was arraigned by video phone with Justice of the Peace Court 3 and released on an unsecured bond of \$4,040, pending a

future court appearance in the Sussex County Court of Common Pleas.

Gooding was arraigned by video phone with Justice of the Peace Court 3 and released on an unsecured bond of \$4,050, pending a future court appearance in the Sussex County Court of Common Pleas.

Defendants are presumed innocent and are entitled to a jury trial at which the State bears the burden of proving each charge beyond a reasonable doubt.

The public is encouraged to report fish, wildlife and boating violations to the Natural Resources Police by calling 302-739-4580 or through the DENRP Tip app on a smartphone, which can be downloaded free of charge by searching "DENRP Tip" via the Google Play Store or the iTunes App Store.

About DNREC

The Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control protects and manages the state's natural resources, protects public health, provides outdoor recreational opportunities and educates Delawareans about the environment. The Division of Fish and Wildlife conserves and manages Delaware's fish and wildlife and their habitats, and provides fishing, hunting, wildlife viewing and boating access on nearly 65,000 acres of public land. For more information, visit the [website](#) and connect with DNREC on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) or [LinkedIn](#).

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